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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - POPE BENEDICT XVI CHINA
PARIS - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#)1. POPE BENEDICT XVI
- [1](#)2. CHINA

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

NOT SURPRISINGLY ALL FRONT PAGES AND EDITORIALS ARE DEVOTED TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S CHOICE OF CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER, WHO BECOMES POPE BENEDICT XVI. THE VARIETY COMES IN THE NATURE OF THE COMMENTARY. FOR LE FIGARO THE CHOICE MARKS "A CONTINUITY" WITH JOHN PAUL II, WHILE LIBERATION NOTES THAT THE "CONSERVATIVE WING OF THE CHURCH" IS FAVORED. LE PARISIEN ECHOES THIS VIEW IN ITS HEADLINE: "A CONSERVATIVE AT THE VATICAN," WHILE FRANCE SOIR'S HEADLINE IS SIMPLY: "A GERMAN POPE." FOR CATHOLIC LA CROIX, POPE BENEDICT XVI WILL BE A "POPE OF TRANSITION." (SEE PART C)

LE FIGARO ALSO REPRINTS ITS AUGUST 2004 INTERVIEW WITH THE-THEN CARDINAL RATZINGER. THE NEW POPE REMARKED ABOUT THE EU'S CHRISTIAN ROOTS AND HIS OPPOSITION TO TURKEY'S ENTRY IN THE EU.

CHINA, THE LIFTING OF THE ARMS EMBARGO AND THE RECENT FLARING OF ANIMOSITY BETWEEN BEIJING AND TOKYO ARE REPORTED. IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO COMMENTATOR ALEXANDRE ADLER ANALYZES THE RECENT CONFLICT BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN AS POSSIBLY PART OF A MORE COMPLEX DOMESTIC CHINESE GAME AIMING AT U.S. JAPAN ALLIANCE OR ATTEMPTING TO DESTABILIZE THE CHINESE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER. (SEE PART C)

SECRETARY RICE'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IS NOTED IN LE FIGARO:

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"RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND RUSSIA HAVE NEVER BEEN SIMPLE. THEY DETERIORATED WITH THE WAR IN IRAQ AND THE ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE. THE KREMLIN DOES NOT APPRECIATE 'LESSONS IN DEMOCRACY.' YET, THE SECRETARY'S VISIT IS SEEN AS A SIGN OF D ENTE AND SHE IS PERCEIVED AS UNDERSTANDING RUSSIA BETTER THAN HER PREDECESSOR."

LE FIGARO ECONOMIE NOTES THAT FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER THIERRY BRETON AND XAVIER DARCOS, MINISTER FOR COOPERATION, "APPROACHED PAUL WOLFOWITZ DURING THE G7 AND REQUESTED THAT HE ADDRESS THE CONTROVERSY OF COTTON SUBSIDIES IN THE U.S. WHICH ENDANGER THE COTTON INDUSTRY IN AFRICA, IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING POVERTY."

THE DEBATE ABOUT THE EU CONSTITUTION AND THE FRENCH REFERENDUM CONTINUES. LES ECHOS CARRIES A SMALL QUOTE FROM FORMER AMBASSADOR HOWARD LEACH'S FAREWELL PRESS BRIEFING ON APRIL 12: "THE U.S. IS OBSERVING WITH GREAT INTEREST THE DEBATE ON THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION. WE ARE STRONG PARTISANS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. BUT IF I SAY ANYTHING, THE FRENCH COULD GO THE OTHER WAY."

ECONOMIC LA TRIBUNE COMMENTS ON THE U.S. DECISION CONCERNING EXPORT CONTROLS AND A CATAPULT FOR A FRENCH CARRIER: "IT IS A SUBJECT OF CONCERN FOR THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES: WILL THE FUTURE 2ND FRENCH AIRCRAFT CARRIER BE EQUIPPED WITH CATAPULTS MADE IN AMERICA ENABLING THE PLANES ON BOARD TO TAKE OFF FROM THE RELATIVELY SHORT DECK OF THIS VESSEL? INDEED, FOR THE TIME BEING, THE UNITED STATES REFUSES TO GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT FOR THIS EQUIPMENT TO BE EXPORTED, EVEN THOUGH IT DOES NOT HAVE STRATEGIC VALUE, TO FRANCE. THE U.S. IS CAREFUL NOT TO SAY THAT THIS REFUSAL IS A RETALIATORY MEASURE AGAINST THE IRRITATING "FRENCHIES" WHO OPOSED THE WAR IN IRAQ AND ARE THE PRINCIPAL SUPPORTERS OF AIRBUS IN ITS RACE AGAINST BOEING. IN PARIS THE TENDENCY IS TO DOWNPLAY THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISPUTE, EMPHASIZING THAT THIS CATAPULTING TECHNOLOGY COULD BE DEVELOPED IN FRANCE. BUT CALCULATIONS ARE BEING MADE AND THE RESULT IS THAT IT WOULD BE COSTLY: AROUND 50 MILLION EUROS TO ACQUIRE THE KNOW-HOW AND SET UP THE TESTING FACILITIES NECESSARY FOR THIS TECHNOLOGY AND ALL OF THIS EFFORT IN ORDER TO PRODUCE ONLY A FEW MACHINES. THE MILITARY, THAT JEALOUSLY MANAGES A BUDGET THAT HAS BEEN TIGHTENED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, WOULD NOT LIKE TO HAVE TO BREAK OPEN ITS PIGGY BANK TO

FINANCE THIS TECHNOLOGY AND IS CROSSING ITS FINGERS HOPING THAT THE FRENCH POLITICAL OFFICIALS WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME THE RETICENCE OF THE AMERICANS. BUT WASHINGTON COULD ASK FOR SOMETHING IN RETURN."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

POPE BENEDICT XVI

"A CONSIDERABLE TASK"

MICHEL SCHIFRES IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (04/20): "WE SHOULD NOT SPECULATE TOO MUCH ON THE CHOICE MADE BY THE CHURCH. IT IS BETTER TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS BEFORE HIM A CONSIDERABLE TASK. NOT ONLY BECAUSE HE SUCCEEDS A POPE WHO WAS ONE OF THE GIANTS OF THE CENTURY, BUT ALSO BECAUSE POPE JOHN PAUL II GAVE THE VATICAN A GLOBAL DIMENSION."

"INTRANSIGENCE"

GERARD DUPUY IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (04/20): "IT IS AS IF POPE BENEDICT XVI SUCCEEDED HIMSELF. WITH THIS CHOICE, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IS NOT RUNNING THE RISK OF BEING ACCUSED OF BEING TOO ORIGINAL. WHAT OTHER CONTEMPORARY INSTITUTION CAN AFFORD TO ELECT AN OLD MAN AT ITS HELM? OR SHOW SUCH ASSURANCE ABOUT ITS UNCHANGING DOGMA, ITS IMMUTABILITY, ITS INDIFFERENCE TO CHANGES IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD? NOTHING IN RATZINGER'S PAST PREDICTS THE POSSIBILITY FOR CHANGE."

"FORCE IN TRANSITION"

MICHEL KUBLER IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (04/20): "CARDINAL RATZINGER MOST PROBABLY GOT THE SUPPORT OF A NUMBER OF VOTERS WHO ARE EAGER TO CREATE A PERIOD OF TRANSITION AFTER THE VERY IMPOSING PONTIFICATE OF JOHN PAUL II. CARDINAL RATZINGER HAD HIS PREDECESSOR'S FULL TRUST. HE IS ALSO THE BEST PLACED TO GUARANTEE THAT THE DOGMA WILL BE PROTECTED AGAINST A DILUTION IN MODERNITY. THE CHOICE CAN THEREFORE BE INTERPRETED AS A CHOICE FOR A POPE OF TRANSITION, BUT A TRANSITION THAT WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE ALL THAT SMOOTH, FOR THE NEW POPE HAS STRONG CONVICTIONS."

"THE STRATEGIST'S VICTORY"

OLIVIER PICARD IN REGIONAL LES DERNIERES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE (04/20): "THE MOST LIBERAL AMONG FRENCH CATHOLICS CAN LEGITIMATELY FEAR A CONSERVATIVE TIGHTENING OF THE SCREWS, JUST WHEN THEY WERE EXPECTING THE OPPOSITE. AS FOR THE SECULARISM OF 'THE OLDEST DAUGHTER OF THE CHURCH' (FRANCE), SHE WAS OPENLY CRITICIZED BY THE NEW POPE WHEN THE LAW ON RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS WAS VOTED ON."

CHINA

"DANGER IN CHINA"

ALEXANDRE ADLER IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (04/20): "THE VIOLENT ANTI-JAPANESE CAMPAIGN IS A WARNING TO THE AMERICAN PARTNER-ADVERSARY TO STAY PUT. BECAUSE BEIJING FEARS THE BOOMERANG EFFECT OF AN ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN. JAPAN IS BEING USED AS A SCAPEGOAT. IF ONE LOOKS A LITTLE CLOSER, ONE SEES THAT THE ANTI-JAPANESE DEMONSTRATIONS CAME ABOUT SHORTLY AFTER THE U.S. AND JAPAN SIGNED A COMMUNIQUE RE-AFFIRMING THEIR SOLIDARITY AGAINST POTENTIAL THREATS IN ASIA, AND ESPECIALLY AFTER SIGNIFYING THAT THIS THREAT COULD CONCERN TAIWAN. THE SITUATION IS LIKE A SINISTER SET OF RUSSIAN DOLLS OPENING A FRIGHTENING VISTA OF CHINA BREAKING WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD. IT IS NOT JAPAN THAT IS TARGETED, BUT THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN ALLIANCE. IT IS NOT THIS ALLIANCE THAT IS TARGETED, BUT THE TACIT AND NOW MORE EXPLICIT SUPPORT OF TAIWAN. AND IT IS NOT EVEN TAIWAN WHICH IS TARGETED. WHO THEN? . THERE SEEMS TO BE IN CHINA TODAY A GROUP AGITATING FOR THE REUNIFICATION WITH TAIWAN TO BETTER THWART IT. SUCH A CAMPAIGN CAN ONLY LEAD TO INCREASING TENSION BETWEEN CHINA AND ITS THREE MAJOR ECONOMIC PARTNERS: TAIWAN, JAPAN AND THE U.S. WITHOUT WANTING TO POINT TO A PLOT, IF ONE WANTED TO TOPPLE THE DUET OF THE CHINESE PRESIDENT AND HIS PRIME MINISTER, THIS WOULD BE THE WAY TO GO." WOLFF